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MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE AT UNISA WESTERN CAPE: A CASE STUDY

Presented by Geraldine Cele

The purpose of this poster is to describe the mobile library as a method of library service delivery in Open Distance Learning (ODL). In the context of this presentation the mobile library is a vehicle that carries library material and services to Unisa students. The mobile library is considered as one of the dynamic strategies of providing library and information service to students residing in outlying areas of Cape Town. It reaches out to students who would under normal circumstances not be able to visit branch libraries. It strives to be student-centred by enhancing opportunities of equitable access to library services. The mobile library service provides access to the print book collection, assistance with e-books and journals, electronic resources, reference service, catalogue and subject searches, library related and non-library related queries. An opportunity for students to browse through the collection is created. A self- help information literacy CD is handed out to students. Accurate records are kept and client satisfaction surveys are conducted to improve the quality service. The service is not restricted to one geographical location. The mobile library visits four routes with thirty four towns monthly. In line with the ODL policy, a process of including computer facilities for students in the mobile library is under way. Relationships with local authorities and public libraries have been forged to provide the mobile library with electricity, safe, secure parking and bathroom facilities during visits. A wide range of communication strategies are employed to ensure that the service runs smoothly. Mobile Library staffing is restricted to the Mobile Librarian and the Mobile Library Driver. Students appreciate the service offered as it breaks students' isolation. Students get prescribed and recommended books from the mobile library to complete their assignment projects. Students find the mobile library convenient, reliable, faster and helpful to their studies.

STATISTICS

MOBILE LIBRARY TRAVEL EXPENSES											
	June	July	August	September	October	November	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Number of kilometres travelled	3 602	3 593	3 662	2 993	3 015	3 592	3 562	3 604	3 597	3 545	3 617
Quantity of diesel in litres filled at petrol station	1 123.00	1 316.17	1 080.35	999.85	1 215.46	1 059.87	1 115.82	1 132.84	1 187.62	1 200.89	1 187.62
Amount of diesel in Rand	R 10 965.00	R 10 479.30	R 10 314.35	R 9 660.06	R 12 246.64	R 11 764.86	R 12 500.00	R 12 500.00	R 13 694.46	R 14 185.48	R 13 794.78
Wash bay	R 480.00	R 120.00	R 240.00	R 240.00	R 120.00	R 480.00	R 480.00	R 180.00	R 180.00	R 170.00	R 180.00
Toll fees	R 216.00	R 216.00	R 216.00	R 144.00	R 144.00	R 144.00	R 144.00	R 147.00	R 150.00	R 150.00	R 150.00
Petrol costs consumption for the generator							R 40.11				R 133.91
Petrol costs							R 429.00				
Service costs								R 64.20			

Table 3: June 2011 - June 2012 bus mileage, diesel consumption and related costs.

SUSTINENCE & ACCOMMODATION											
	June	July	August	September	October	November	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Accommodation	R 25 010.00	R 15 847.00	R 14 920.00	R 13 220.00	R 15 732.00	R 15 732.00	R 14 886.00	R 14 860.00	R 14 860.00	R 14 860.00	R 14 860.00
Subsistence allowance	R 9 840.00	R 4 180.00	R 3 800.00	R 3 800.00	R 3 800.00	R 3 800.00	R 3 800.00	R 3 800.00	R 3 800.00	R 3 800.00	R 3 800.00
Total	R 31 850.00	R 20 027.00	R 18 392.00	R 16 262.00	R 19 532.00	R 19 532.00	R 18 686.00	R 18 660.00	R 18 660.00	R 18 660.00	R 18 660.00

Table 4: June 2011 - June 2012 accommodation and subsistence costs

MOBILE LIBRARY USAGE STATISTICS											
	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Activity											
Assist with Pretoria/Branch library related queries	13	10	11	19	17	59	11	62	53	78	48
Number of students who visited the mobile library	373	325	305	258	342	290	335	339	361	275	235
Reference service - Number of information enquiries	227	89	155	135	162	305	154	121	109	83	67
Books issued	277	326	387	179	200	0	441	439	337	231	207
Books returned	24	212	288	239	287	199	30	447	402	421	254
Registration queries	103	77	55	26	30	17	92	28	39	21	7
Searches							207	176	195	129	100
My life/My Unisa queries	42	1	5	9	0	45	34	11	26	11	45
Information enquiries	7	8	2	1	0	0	15	0	0	2	0
Tutorials	1	1	1	1	2	0	6	0	0	0	0
Examinations	2	0	2	17	25	31	1	0	0	0	0
Book requests	3	11	10	9	9	0	30	15	9	2	19

Table 1: June 2011 - June 2012 mobile library service statistics

COMMUNICATION											
	June	July	Aug	Sept	October	November	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Sms messages were sent to students informing them about changes in service hours											
Number of students contacted	4 431	3276	42 414	4 819	3276	42 414	3 836	4 632	3 091	3 927	3 946
Cost of sms messages	R 859.61	R 635.00	R 2 224.40	R 934.00	R 635.00	R 12 443.55	R 744.18	R 896.58	R 599.65	R 761.85	R 765.54

Table 2: June 2011 - June 2012 sms messages sent to students

The mobile library service at Unisa Western Cape started in June 2011 in order to enhance student support. In line with regional goals, the mobile library service promotes students' positive learning experience, students' success and graduateness. It reaches out to students who cannot visit the branch library by visiting 34 towns in the Western Cape monthly. It is staffed by the Mobile Librarian and the Mobile Library Driver & Assistant.



ROUTES

ROUTE 1: N2 WEST	TIME	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Hermanus	10:00-12:00	4	4	1	6	3	1	5	2	7	4	X
Bredasdorp	13:30-15:00	4	4	1	6	3	1	5	2	7	4	X
Swellendam	08:00-09:30	5	5	2	7	4	2	6	3	8	5	X
Riversdale (Municipal parking)	11:00-13:00	5	5	2	7	4	2	6	3	8	5	X
Heidelberg	14:00-15:00	5	5	2	7	4	2	6	3	8	5	X
Riviersonderend	09:00-10:00	6	6	3	8	5	3	7	4	9	6	X
Caledon	11:00-14:00	6	6	3	8	5	3	7	4	9	6	X

ROUTE 4: N1 KAROO	TIME	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Worcester	10:00-13:00	25	25	22	27	24	22	26	23	28	25	X
Robertson (Municipal parking)	14:00-15:30	25	25	22	27	24	22	26	23	28	25	X
Montagu	08:00-09:00	26	26	23	28	25	23	27	24	29	26	X
Touwsrivier	11:00-12:00	26	26	23	28	25	23	27	24	29	26	X
Laingsburg	13:30-14:30	26	26	23	28	25	23	27	24	29	26	X
Beaufort-West	08:00-10:30	27	27	24	29	26	24	28	25	30	27	X
Prince Albert	13:00-14:00	27	27	24	29	26	24	28	25	30	27	X
Ceres	10:00-12:00	28	28	25	30	27	25	29	26	31	28	X
Tulbagh	13:00-14:00	28	28	25	30	27	25	29	26	31	28	X

Aspects to considered in planning:

- Route planning
- Check lists
- Standard Operating Procedures
- Activity logs
- Marketing
- Safety and security

